



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

Supervisor Patricia Jursik, District 8

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Supervisor Patricia Jursik Warns of Ice Hazards **Danger in Walking on the Ice Build-up Along Our Shores**

“Yes, as everyone knows, meditation and water are wedded forever.”
Herman Melville, MOBY DICK, Ch. 1.

Please parents, warn of the dangers of walking on the shore line in a winter that builds ice mounds beyond the shoreline. Children do not know of this danger until it is too late.

In the 1980s when my own children were young along with others of our South Shore, parents would re-tell the tragic story of a Cudahy youth and the man that tried to save the boy. We have not had many winters in the last decade where this story needed telling, but this winter is one.

Herman Melville tells us there is something about the water’s edge that draws us. With the stark beauty of this winter, the pristine white of the snow and clouds set against the steely blue of our Great Lake, no reader of Moby Dick much less a playful child can resist the water’s edge. Yet the water’s edge is built high with ice mounds and holds great danger. On my walk yesterday, I saw the boot steps of the curious at the very top of the ice which is well beyond the shore’s edge.

Here is a brief synopsis of a true story told decades ago about a Cudahy man and youth: A man was walking along the shores of Sheridan Park when several boys ran to him shouting that their friend was in trouble and needed help. The man followed the boys and saw that the children had been playing along the shore and had climbed the ice mounds. He climbed to the top and saw a young boy had slipped off. The water was only up to his waist, but because the wave action had washed out the underside of the ice build-up, there was no way the boy could climb out. The man lay on the ice and reached out to the child. The boy tried to reach too but was already feeling the effects of hypothermia and soon he slipped away under the water. The man knew he could not get the boy without going into the water, but going in the water meant death for two. There was no way for the boy to get out. The man looked around for a rope or some way to reach first responders. All of it was too late.

The distraught man talked to the boy’s mother after his body was recovered about how futile any efforts had been. The mother replied that the only good to be obtained by her son’s death was in warning other children of the danger of playing at the water’s edge in winter. For many years, Cudahy families warned their children and told the story.

There has not been a winter of ice along our shores like this for many years. The parents that remember the Sheridan Park story of a winter past are gone. Seeing the footsteps in the snow that has formed out in the lake reminded this grandmother of our warnings.

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